Economic and Social Council

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Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 22 July 2015

[*on the recommendation of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (E/2015/31)*]

2015/27. Science, technology and innovation for development

The Economic and Social Council,

Recognizing the role of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development as the United Nations torch-bearer for science, technology and innovation for development,

Recognizing also the critical role and contribution of science, technology and innovation in building and maintaining national competitiveness in the global economy, addressing global challenges and realizing sustainable development,

Recognizing further the seminal role that information and communications technologies play in promoting and empowering science, technology and innovation for development,

Recalling the 2005 World Summit Outcome,[1] in which it was recognized that science and technology, including information and communications technologies, are vital for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, and reaffirming the commitments contained therein,

Recalling also that the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development is the secretariat of the Commission,

Recognizing that the General Assembly, in its resolution 68/220 of 20 December 2013 on science, technology and innovation for development, encouraged the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to continue to undertake science, technology and innovation policy reviews, with a view to assisting developing countries and countries with economies in transition in identifying the measures that are needed to integrate science, technology and innovation policies into their national development strategies,

Recalling Economic and Social Council decision 2011/235 of 26 July 2011 providing for the extension, until 2015, of the mandate of the Gender Advisory Board of the Commission, as well as General Assembly resolutions 66/129 of 19 December 2011 and 66/211 and 66/216 of 22 December 2011 addressing,

[1] General Assembly resolution 60/1.

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respectively, the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas, barriers to equal access for women and girls to science and technology, and the integration of a gender perspective into development policies and programmes,

Recognizing the instrumental role of science, technology and innovation in the achievement of a number of Millennium Development Goals, and highlighting the role of science, technology and innovation as an enabler of the post-2015 development agenda to continue to address global challenges,

Taking note of the report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals[2] and the implications of the same for the global science, technology and innovation community,

Taking note also of the synthesis report of the Secretary-General on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, entitled "The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet",[3] which identifies technology, science and innovation as means to implement the sustainable development agenda,

Welcoming the work of the Commission on its two current priority themes, "Strategic foresight for the post-2015 development agenda" and "Digital development",

Noting the need for new approaches that embed science, technology and innovation policies and capacity-building as crucial components of national development plans, inter alia, through collaboration between sectoral ministries, science, technology and innovation and information and communications technology agencies and a range of regulatory bodies,

Recognizing that technology foresight exercises could help policymakers and stakeholders in the future implementation of the post-2015 development agenda through the identification of challenges and opportunities that can be addressed strategically, and that technology trends should be analysed, keeping in mind the wider socioeconomic context,

Recognizing also that a well-developed digital ecosystem[4] is a primary requirement for effective digital development and the facilitation of science, technology and innovation,

Recognizing further the increased regional integration efforts across the world and the associated regional dimension of science, technology and innovation issues,

Noting the significant achievements and continuing potential contribution of information and communications technologies to human welfare, economic prosperity and employment,

Noting also that the success of using technology and innovation policies at the national level is facilitated by, among other things, creating policy environments that enable education and research institutions, businesses and industry to innovate, invest and transform science, technology and innovation into employment and economic growth incorporating all interrelated elements, including knowledge transfer,

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[2] A/68/970 and Corr.1.

[3] A/69/700.

[4] The digital ecosystem involves components such as technological infrastructure, data infrastructure, financial infrastructure, institutional infrastructure and human infrastructure.

Recommends the following for consideration by national Governments, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development:

(*a*) Governments, individually and collectively, are encouraged to take into account the findings of the Commission and to consider taking the following actions:

(i) To closely link science, technology, innovation and strategies of sustainable development by prominently featuring capacity-building in information and communications technologies and science, technology and innovation in national development planning;

(ii) To promote local innovation capabilities for inclusive and sustainable economic development by bringing together local scientific, vocational and engineering knowledge, including through collaboration with and among national programmes;

(iii) To undertake systemic research, including foresight exercises, on new trends in science, technology and innovation and information and communications technologies and their impact on development, particularly in the context of the post-2015 development agenda;

(iv) To use strategic foresight exercises to identify potential gaps in education for the medium and long term and addressing such gaps with a policy mix, including the promotion of science, technology, engineering and mathematics education and vocational training;

(v) To use strategic foresight as a process to encourage structured debate among all stakeholders, including representatives of Government, science, industry and civil society and the private sector, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, towards creating a shared understanding of long-term issues and building consensus on future policies;

(vi) To undertake strategic foresight initiatives on global and regional challenges at regular intervals and cooperate towards the establishment of a mapping system to review and share technology foresight outcomes, including pilot projects, with other Member States, making use of existing regional mechanisms, and in collaboration with relevant stakeholders;

(vii) To conduct assessments of national innovation systems, including digital ecosystems, to identify weaknesses of the system and make effective policy interventions to strengthen its weaker components, while recognizing the interlinkages between its diverse components;

(viii) To mobilize resources through multiple channels to strengthen the national innovation system for science, technology and innovation;

(ix) To encourage digital natives to play a key role in a community-based approach to science, technology and innovation capacity-building, and facilitate the use of information and communications technologies in the context of the post-2015 development agenda;

(x) To put in place policies that support the development of digital ecosystems, that are inclusive and that encourage the development of local content and attract and support private investment, innovation and entrepreneurship;

(xi) To collaborate with all relevant stakeholders, promote the application of information and communications technologies in all sectors, improve environmental sustainability and encourage the creation of suitable facilities to recycle and dispose of e-waste;

(xii) To address the ongoing and persistent gender gap in the fields of science, technology and innovation as a whole, and science, technology, engineering and mathematics education in particular, by encouraging mentoring and supporting other efforts to attract and retain women and girls in those fields;

(xiii) To support the policies and activities of developing countries in the fields of science and technology through North-South and South-South cooperation by encouraging financial and technical assistance, capacity-building, technology transfer on mutually agreed terms and conditions and technical training programmes or courses;

(*b*) The Commission is encouraged:

(i) To continue its role as a torch-bearer for science, technology and innovation and to provide high-level advice to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on relevant science, technology, engineering and innovation issues;

(ii) To help to articulate the important role of information and communications technologies and science, technology, innovation and engineering as enablers in the future post-2015 development agenda by acting as a forum for strategic planning and providing foresight about critical trends in science, technology and innovation in key sectors of the economy and drawing attention to emerging and disruptive technologies;

(iii) To raise awareness and facilitate networking and partnerships between various technology foresight organizations and networks, in collaboration with other stakeholders, with the objectives of improving international cooperation in emerging technology foresight tools and methodologies, sharing experiences and best practices and organizing training programmes and collaborative projects such as on the future of work, science, technology and innovation skills and the future employability of science, technology and innovation professionals;

(iv) To raise awareness among policymakers about the process of innovation and to identify particular opportunities for developing countries to benefit from such innovation, with special attention being placed on new trends in innovation that can offer novel possibilities for developing countries;

(v) To proactively strengthen and revitalize global science, technology and innovation partnerships for sustainable development, which would entail the engagement of the Commission in (*a*) translating technology foresight into elaborating the scope of specific international projects for targeted research, technology development and deployment and initiatives for building human resource capacity for science, technology and innovation; and (*b*) exploring innovative financing models and other resources contributing to enhancing the capacities of developing countries in collaborative projects and initiatives in science, technology and innovation;

(vi) To discuss and explore innovative financing models as a means to attract new sources of investment capital for science, technology, engineering and innovation-based solutions, in collaboration with other organizations, where appropriate;

(vii) To promote capacity-building and cooperation in research and development;

(viii) To provide a forum for sharing best practices, successful local innovation models, case studies and experience on the use of science, technology and engineering for innovation, including the application of new emerging technologies, in symbiotic relationship with information and communications technologies, for inclusive and sustainable development, and to share findings with all relevant United Nations entities;

(ix) To play an active role in creating awareness of the potential contribution of science, technology and innovation to the post-2015 development agenda through substantive inputs, as appropriate, to relevant processes and bodies of the United Nations, and to share findings and good practices on science, technology and innovation among Member States and beyond;

(x) To highlight the importance of the work of the Commission related to the implementation of and follow-up to the areas of information and communications technologies and science, technology and innovation related to the Millennium Development Goals, with the Chair of the Commission to report at appropriate reviews and meetings of the Economic and Social Council, taking into account that 2015 is a year of transition to the post-2015 development agenda;

(*c*) The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development is encouraged:

(i) To seek funding proactively for the expansion of science, technology and innovation policy reviews, with an emphasis on the critical role of information and communications technologies in empowering science, technology and innovation and engineering capacity-building and utilization, and the implementation of the recommendations on those reviews, as appropriate, in close cooperation with United Nations agencies and international organizations;

(ii) To look into the feasibility of including elements of strategic foresight and digital ecosystem assessment in policy reviews of science, technology and innovation and information and communications technologies, possibly by including a chapter dedicated to these themes;

(iii) To plan for periodic updates on progress made in countries for which science, technology and innovation policy reviews have been performed and to invite those countries to report to the Commission on progress made, lessons learned and challenges encountered in implementing recommendations;

(iv) To encourage the Gender Advisory Board of the Commission to provide inputs to the policy deliberations and documentation of the Commission, to report on progress at the annual sessions of the Commission and to better integrate gender perspectives into science, technology and innovation policy reviews.

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